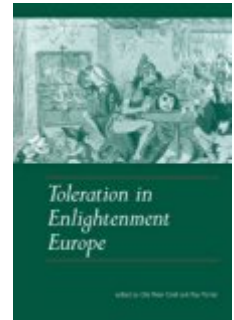


**Ole Peter Grell, Roy Porter, eds..** *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. ix + 270 pp. \$59.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-521-65196-7.



**Reviewed by** Stephen Allen

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Tolerance and Intolerance in the Eighteenth Century

*Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* is the third in a series of essay collections on the concept and practice of toleration in post-medieval Europe.[1] This volume comes out of a 1997 conference held at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and it covers the later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, a period crucial for the development of modern ideas about toleration, the separation of Church and State, and freedom of thought and belief. The first five chapters discuss the philosophical underpinnings of Enlightenment toleration, while the remaining eight examine the progress of toleration in various European countries.

The volume begins with a brief introductory article by the editors, which is followed by the longest and most comprehensive piece in the volume: Martin Fitzpatrick's "Toleration and the Enlightenment Movement." Fitzpatrick's article is a general survey of toleration in the Enlightenment, with particular attention paid to Locke and Voltaire. He describes how toleration, once a

purely religious issue, became involved in debates about the nature and purpose of secular government. Whereas earlier calls had been for the toleration of minority religious groups, later calls for toleration centered on individuals as beings capable of free thought.

Robert Wokler's provocatively titled "Multiculturalism and Ethnic Cleansing in the Enlightenment" takes issue with modern critics who contend that the Enlightenment is ultimately responsible for the genocides and totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. Referring specifically to recent events in Bosnia and Kosovo, Wokler argues that the opposite is true: "had belief in Enlightenment principles of toleration been sufficiently widespread, it would not have been possible for our governments to disregard first genocide and then ethnic cleansing on European soil" (p. 71).

Sylvana Tomaselli, in "Intolerance, the Virtue of Princes and Radicals," demonstrates that tolerance was generally not considered as an end but as the means to an end, that end usually being a peaceful society or good government. This helps explain the apparent contradictions found in

some Enlightenment authors who preached tolerance but specifically excluded certain groups. Locke, for example, did not extend his program of toleration as far as atheists and Roman Catholics. Atheists could not swear binding oaths, and Roman Catholics owed allegiance to the pope, which means that neither group could fully participate in or be committed to an unified society.

In "Spinoza, Locke, and the Enlightenment Battle for Toleration," Jonathan I. Israel compares the two different understandings of toleration found in the works of Locke and Spinoza. Locke argued for a limited view of toleration based on theological concerns. He started from the idea that each individual should be free to participate in an organized religion of his or her choice as long as that did not conflict with the stability of the state. Locke's toleration can thus be described as freedom of worship. Spinoza, on the other hand, promulgated an idea of toleration that was based on the individual's right to think and speak freely, and that thus extended to all people, no matter what their religious beliefs. The tension between these two different views of toleration continued through the eighteenth century.

So much for toleration in theory. In practice, as Grell and Porter point out in their introduction: "the eighteenth century saw toleration nowhere unequivocally and comprehensively embraced" (p. 1). Where toleration did make inroads, it was more the result of pragmatic calculation than ideological fervor. In those places where toleration did eventually gain ground, it was through fits and starts and in limited amounts.

The specific nations discussed in *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* can be divided into roughly three categories, depending on how firmly ideas of toleration took hold. Not surprisingly, toleration has its greatest success in those nations that were home to the majority of Enlightenment intellectuals: the Dutch Republic, England, and France, covered respectively by Ernestine van der Wall ("Toleration and Enlightenment in the Dutch

Republic"), Justin Champion ("Toleration and Citizenship in Enlightenment England: John Tolland and the Naturalization of the Jews, 1714-1753), and Marisa Linton ("Citizenship and Religious Toleration in France"). The Dutch Republic was probably the most tolerant of the three nations at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but the inclusion of toleration in the wider context of the Enlightenment led to bitter debates between pro- and anti-Enlightenment groups. It took the Batavian Revolution to fully separate Church and State in the Republic and achieve widespread toleration. England was frequently used as an example of a tolerant nation by continental writers (above all Voltaire), and it would have helped greatly if this volume had contained a survey of developments in England. As is, Champion's article provides an interesting insight into one author's views on Jewish naturalization, but does not discuss the wider context in any great detail. France was in the paradoxical situation of being to some extent the home of the Enlightenment, but also being less tolerant in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth. Protestants did make some progress during the eighteenth century, but full toleration did not come until the French Revolution.

A second category contains those areas where the Enlightenment and toleration ideals made some progress but were never widely accepted. The Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, and Poland-Lithuania all enjoyed some degree of toleration based on expedience: all three were multi-state nations, with different religions being represented in different proportions, and government would not have been possible without some accommodation. In the Empire (covered by Joachim Whaley in "A Tolerant Society? Religious Toleration in the Holy Roman Empire, 1648-1806") and the Habsburg lands (Karl Vocelka, "Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy: History of a Belated and Short-Lived Phenomenon"), toleration and the Enlightenment in general were accepted

and promulgated by only a few monarchs, above all Frederick the Great and Joseph II.

Poland represents a rather different problem, discussed in Michael G. Mueller's "Toleration in Eastern Europe: The Dissident Question in Eighteenth-Century Poland-Lithuania." Here, toleration of religious minorities became tied up with nationalist politics and the ambitions of Poland's neighbors, who claimed to be concerned with the fate of the minority Protestants (Germany) and Orthodox Christians (Russia). Because of the partition of Poland in 1772, it is difficult to tell whether Enlightenment ideas of toleration would have eventually taken root on their own.

Finally, there are those countries that were aggressively antithetical to Enlightenment ideas: Italy (Nicholas Davidson, "Toleration in Enlightenment Italy") and Spain (Henry Kamen, "Inquisition, Tolerance, and Liberty in Eighteenth-Century Spain"). Although Italy was home to the Papal States and was one of the centers of the Inquisition, Enlightenment ideas did manage to penetrate in some areas, especially as the forces of repression and censorship started to crumble during the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, toleration never spread very far beyond a few states such as Tuscany and Venice. Spain did not have any religious minorities, so there was never any pressing need to develop a working theory of tolerance, with the result that "practical toleration of any sort, let alone legal, did not come into existence for the country until the 1960s" (p. 257).

On the whole, this is a good survey of both the theory and practice of toleration in eighteenth-century Europe, although a more comprehensive article on England would have been welcome. There are the usual problems that accompany essay collections (differences in style, approach, methodology), but the papers stick very closely to the main theme of tolerance, giving the volume an internal coherence that is often lacking in published conference papers.

Notes

[1]. The previous two volumes are: Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, and Nicholas Tyckes, eds., *From Persecution to Tolerance: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scriber, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (New York and Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

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